3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the proposed project for the specific issue areas that were identified through the Initial Study process as having the potential to experience significant impacts. This section is the primary component of the Draft EIR, as it provides information on the project site's existing conditions, the type and magnitude of the project's individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid such impacts. The existing conditions component of the analysis defines the environmental conditions as they exist on and near the project site at the time the Notice of Preparation was published, while project impacts describe the project's effect on the existing environment. As required by Section 15126.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the impacts sections include direct, indirect, and short- and long-term impacts associated with project implementation. Note, however, that the impact discussions are organized by severity (i.e., less than significant, potentially significant, and significant and unavoidable) for convenience in evaluating the overall severity of the impacts of the proposed project upon a particular environmental issue area, rather than by the factors stated above.

A "significant effect" is defined by Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant."

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the setting relevant to that issue area. Following the setting is a discussion of the project's impacts relative to the issue area. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the "significance thresholds," which are those criteria adopted by the city, other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation.

As required by the CEQA Guidelines, this document discusses any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans. However, consistent with the scope and purpose of this document, the discussion primarily focuses on those requirements adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and an assessment of whether any inconsistency with these standards creates a significant physical impact on the environment. The ultimate determination of whether this project is consistent with the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance is a decision that resides exclusively with the decision-making body (i.e., the Planning Commission or the City Council on appeal), not with this environmental document.

The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other future development in the area. Only one residential project of similar size is currently under construction or considered in the area. Therefore, the cumulative impact analysis is based upon consideration of the proposed project with this residential project along with other regionally

significant projects located within the City limits that could affect environmental conditions in the City. For the EIR traffic analysis, an annual growth factor of 1.5 percent was also included at all study area intersections to the traffic generated by the cumulative projects to account for area-wide growth that would occur.

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section describes existing aesthetic and visual resources of the project area. In particular, descriptions of existing visual characteristics, both on site and in the vicinity of the project site, are presented. In addition, existing plans and policies relevant to aesthetic and visual resource issues associated with implementation of the project are provided. Potential impacts to aesthetic and visual resources due to the project are evaluated, based on analysis of photographs, site reconnaissance, and project data. Finally, mitigation measures intended to reduce impacts to aesthetic and visual resources are proposed, where appropriate. It should be noted that the Initial Study indicated that the proposed project would have a substantial adverse effect on scenic resources within a State scenic highway. However, after further study, it was found that no State scenic highway exists within the vicinity of the proposed project; therefore, no further analysis is required.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

Project Site Characteristics

Project Location and Boundaries

The 47.11-acre project site (shown in Figure 3.1-1) is located in the City of La Cañada Flintridge, in a residential neighborhood within the western portion of the San Rafael Hills (approximately 13 miles northeast downtown Los Angeles). Low-intensity residential development surrounds the proposed development area on all sides. Sacred Heart High School lies adjacent to the southern edge of the subject property. The boundary between the cities of La Cañada Flintridge, Pasadena, and Glendale lies about 0.25 mile south of the site. Access to the project site is via Inverness Drive and Haverstock Road to the north, Saint Katherine Drive to the east, and Palmerstone Drive to the south.

Topographic Features

The project site is currently undeveloped and vacant, ranging from approximately 1,330 to 1,625 feet above mean sea level (msl). The project site is defined by a ridgeline near the center of the property, which is listed as a "Significant Land Form" by the City's General Plan. The project site has significant topography and multiple elevations, characterized by a range of moderate to steep sloping ridges (average slope of 48 percent) with open intervening canyons. In addition, a blue-line stream runs northeasterly through the western half of the property toward the Devil's Gate Reservoir, eventually discharging into the Arroyo Seco drainage channel. The eastern portions accommodate a natural debris basin and associated drainage, which flows southeasterly toward the Arroyo Seco directly. Although never graded for development, fill and other debris have been deposited on eastern portions of the property, as the site is located within a naturally occurring high debris-production area. In addition, a graded dirt road (a closed extension of Monarch Drive, which serves as a fire road) currently winds through the eastern portion of the site.

On-Site Vegetation

The project site is marked by a mixture of vegetation, with chaparral and coastal sage scrub covering the ridge and slopes and oak woodland vegetation within the canyon. These habitats are typical for the region, with the canyon bottoms being more heavily vegetated with riparian vegetation.

Although the project site primarily contains undisturbed vegetation, the eastern and southern margins of the project site have a higher level of disturbance through the deposition of fill and debris from nearby grading/clearing activities and/or ruderal trails traversed by hikers and mountain bikers. Disturbed areas scattered throughout the site include fire/dirt roads and their margins.

Existing Viewsheds

Viewsheds refer to the visual qualities of the geographical area that the horizon, topography, and other features, including man-made features, define by providing boundaries or context. The viewsheds associated with the project site are characterized by features, particularly the open space and vegetation, that make up the three primary view planes: foreground, middle ground, and distant/horizon. Foreground view refers to areas immediately adjacent to the viewing point; middle ground view refers to areas within the center of main view frames; and distant/horizon view refers to valleys or mountaintops stretching far into the background. Due to the project site's topography, elevation, and natural setting, the project site comprises significant public views from surrounding areas. The discussions below provide more detailed descriptions of existing views from, of, and through the project site.

Views from the Project Site

The project site provides views of the surrounding hillsides, ridgelines, adjacent residential uses, and a portion of the Foothill Freeway (I-210). Primarily, the view from the western portions of the project site (Figure 3.1-2, Photo 2, and Figure 3.1-4, Photo 6) is of the predominantly rugged and undeveloped ridges designated as "Hillside District" by the City of La Cañada Flintridge General Plan (1993). These areas consist of rolling hills and depressions, which are vegetated and appear continuous. Views from the southern and eastern portions of the site consist predominantly of single-family homes. These homes are typically two-story homes in cul-de-sac residential communities. These neighborhoods contain typical urban vegetation within the yards and open space areas. The views to the north of the project site (Figure 3.1-2, Photo 1; Figure 3.1-3, Photos 3 and 4; Figure 3.1-4, Photo 5; Figure 3.1-5, Photos 7 and 8; and Figure 3.1-6, Photos 9 and 10) consist of the San Gabriel Mountains, Foothill Freeway (I-210), and other portions of the community of La Cañada Flintridge. Photo locations are indicated within Figure 3.1-1 with the exception of photo location 3, which is the bend of Saint Katherine Drive looking north/northwest though the Via Sorrano development, as well as photo locations 11 and 12, which are on the northern side of the Foothill Freeway, as these locations are not included in this aerial view.

Not to Scale

SOURCE: Kudrave Architects

NORTH

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-1**

Aerial View of Project Area Indicating Viewshed A, B, and C and Photo Locations

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

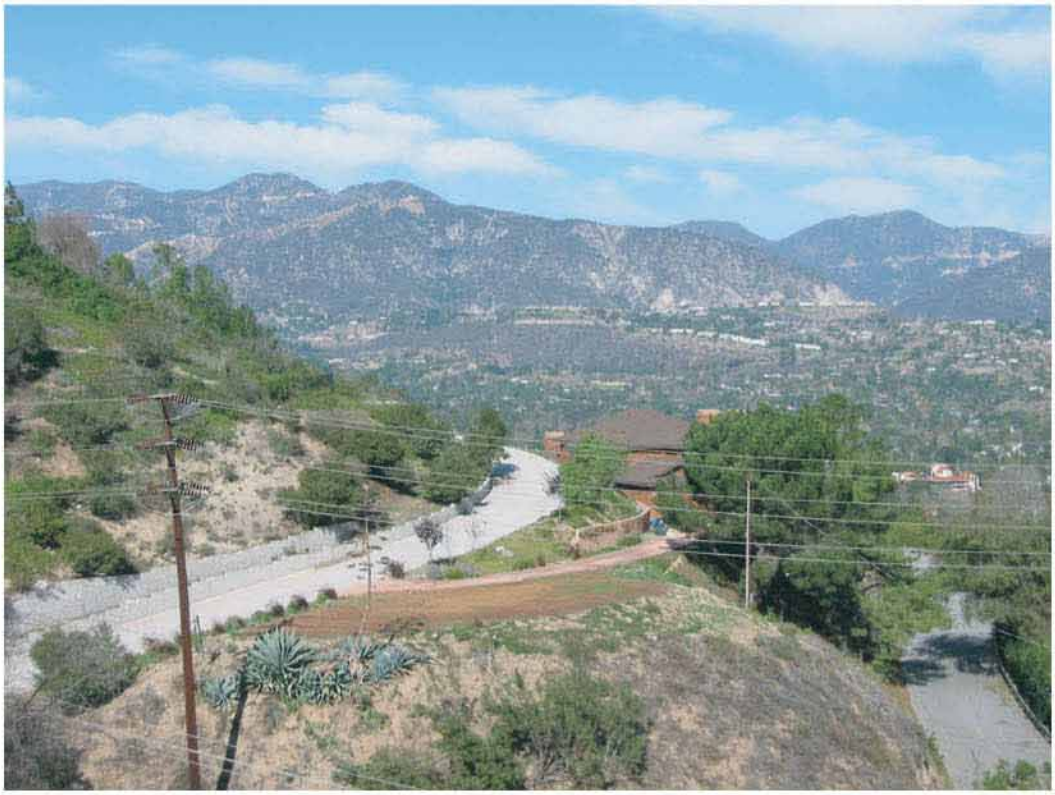

Photo 1: Looking north from below proposed lots 15 and 16

Photo 2: Looking west from proposed lot 1 into proposed lots 2 through 8

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-2**
Photos 1 and 2

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Photo 3: Looking north/northwest from Saint Katherine Drive through via Serrano development

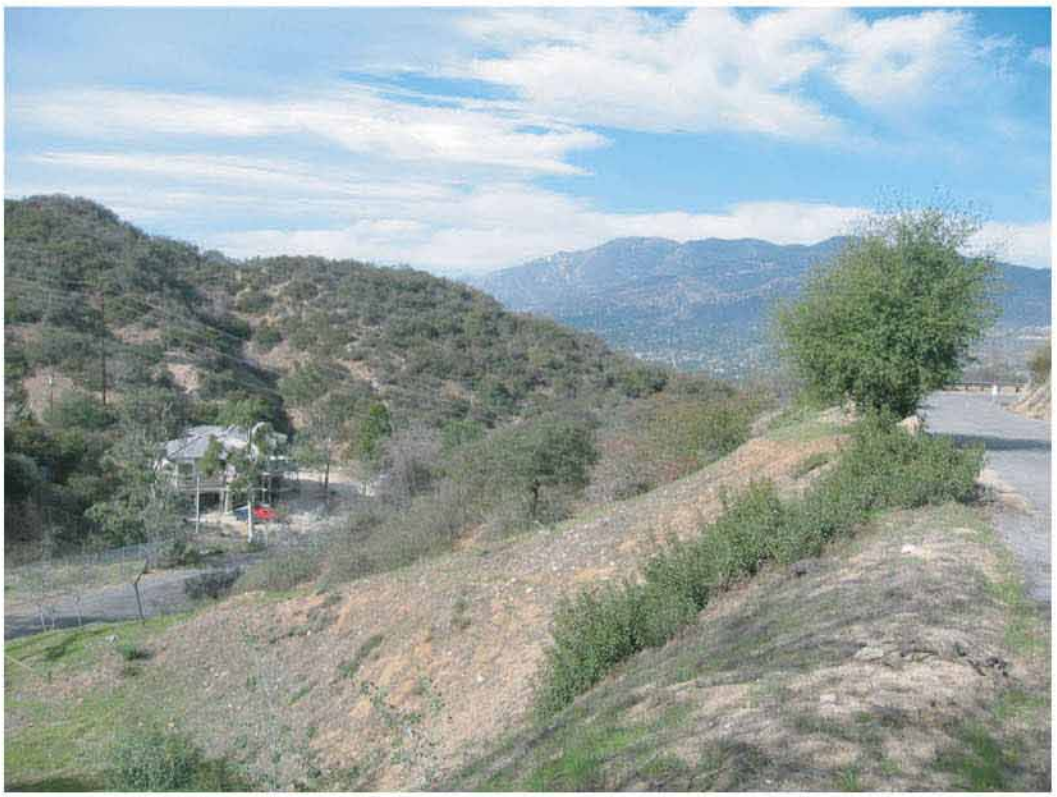

Photo 4: Looking northwest across proposed lot 14 into proposed lots 5 through 7

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-3**
Photos 3 and 4

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

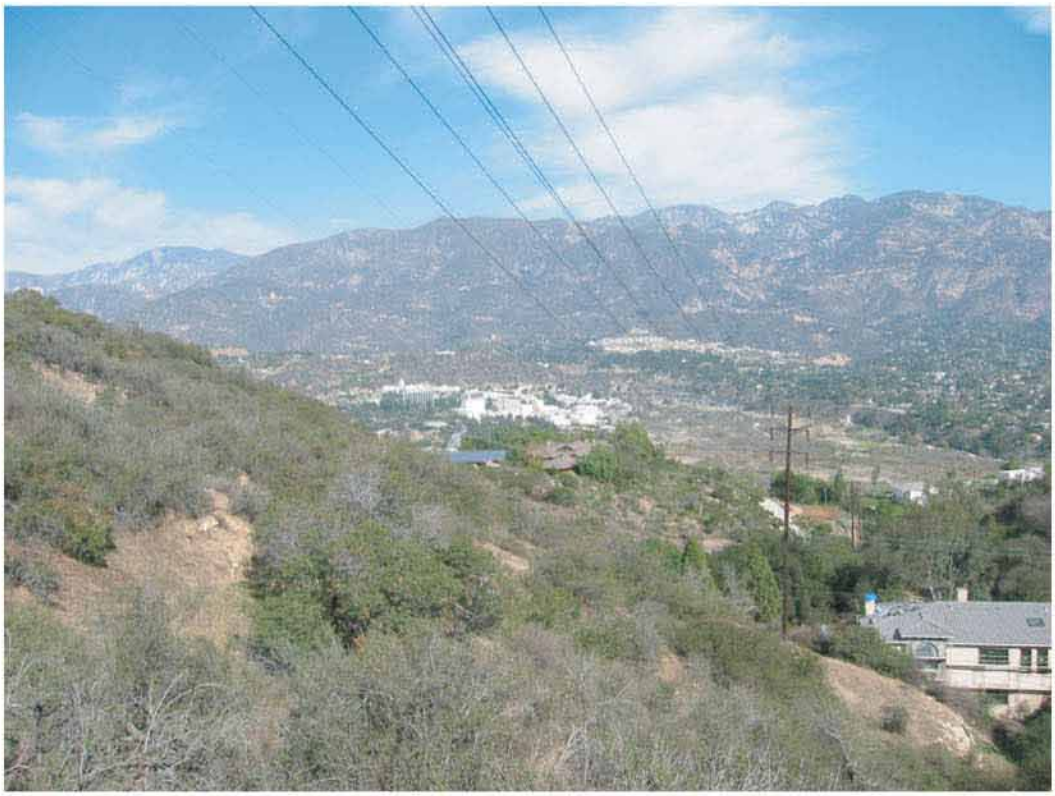

Photo 5: Looking northeast from proposed lot 9

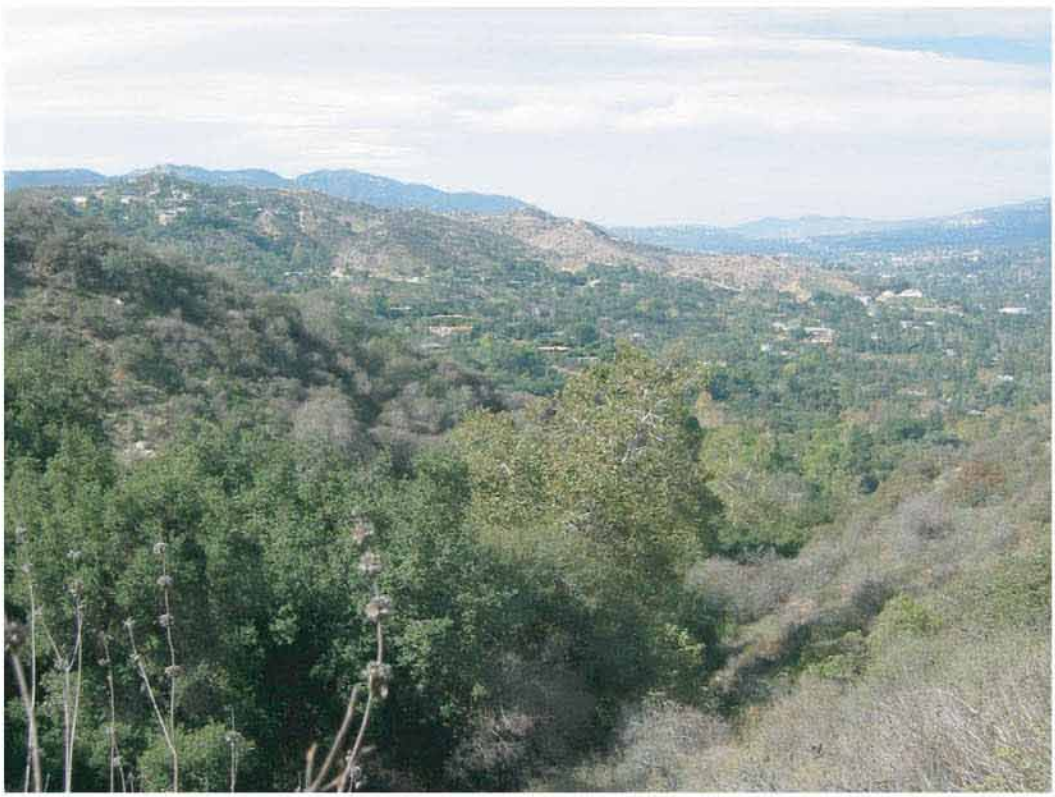

Photo 6: Open space looking northwest from proposed lot 9

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003 10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-4**
Photos 5 and 6

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

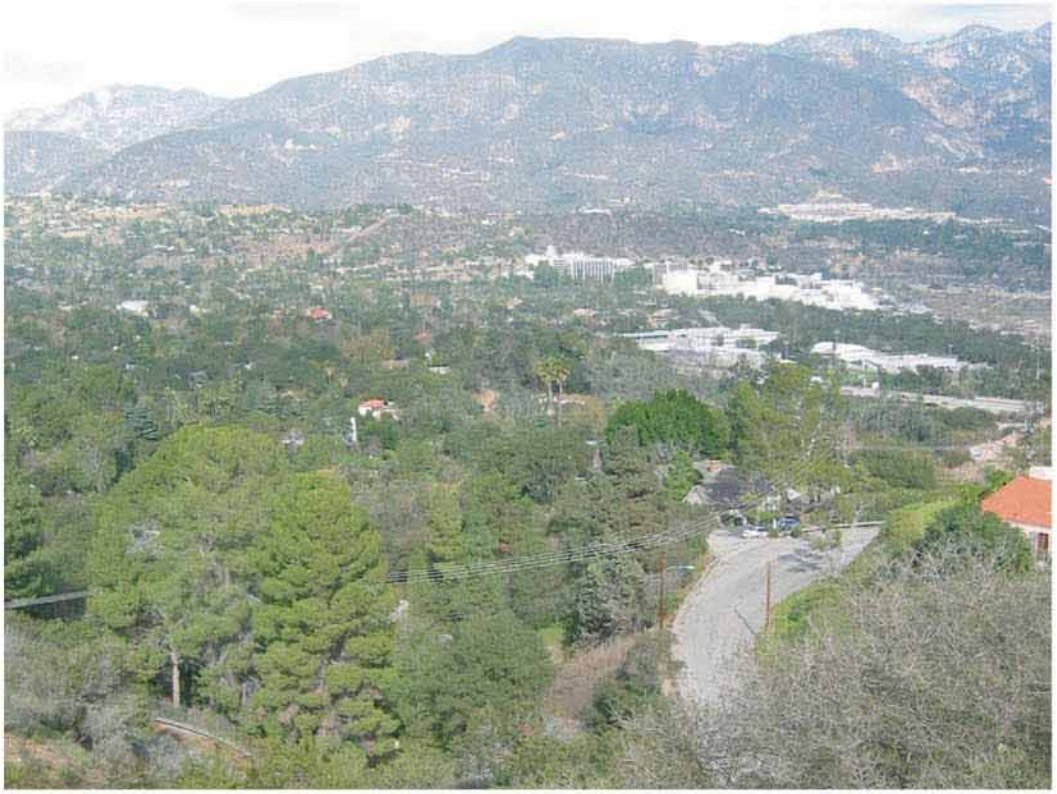

Photo 7: Looking north/northeast from proposed lots 12 and 13

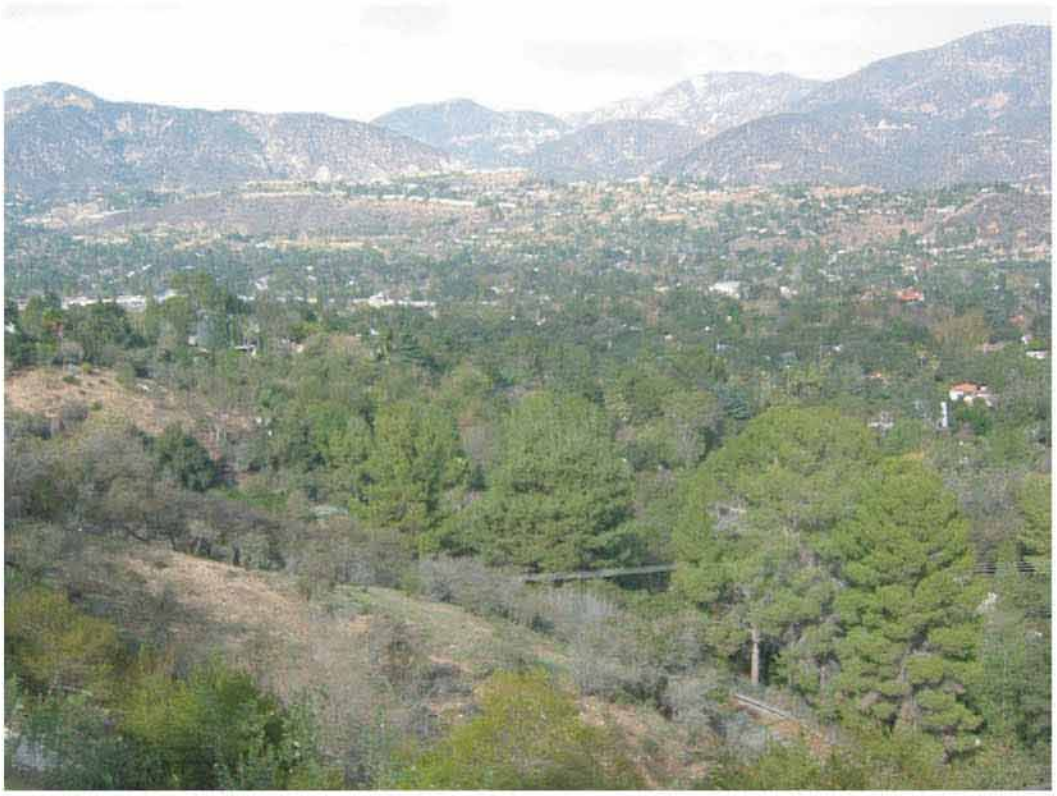

Photo 8: Looking north/northwest from proposed lots 12 and 13

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003 10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-5**
Photos 7 and 8

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

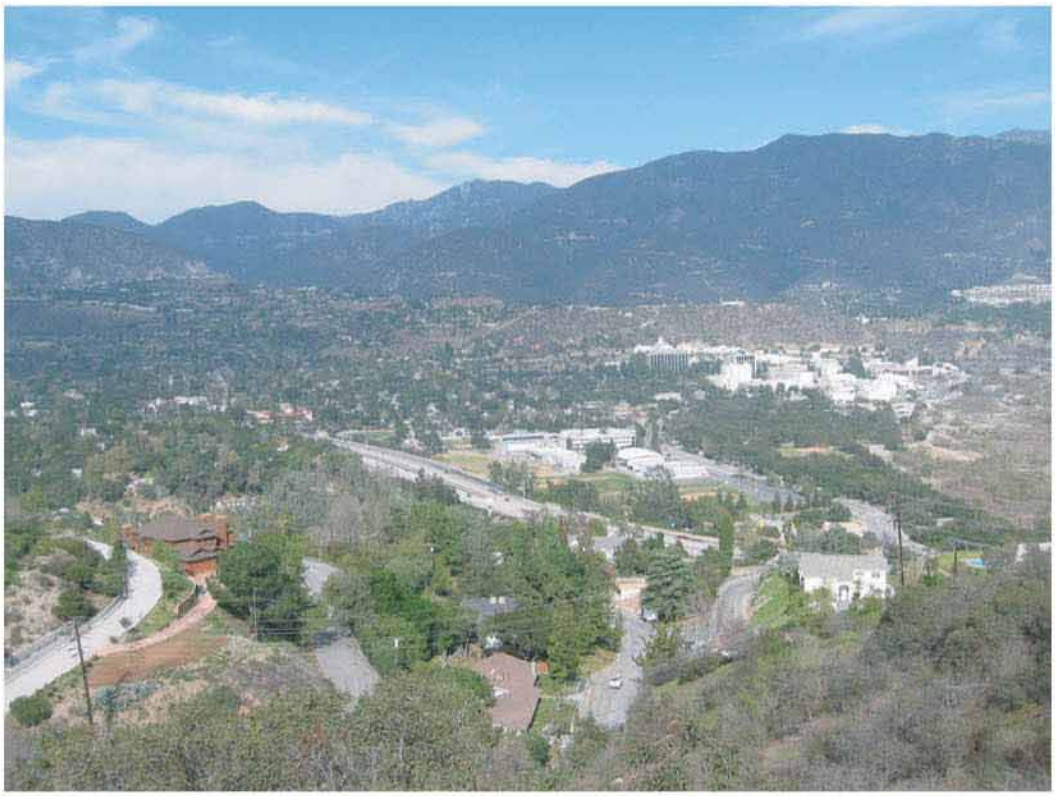

Photo 9: Looking north from above proposed lots 15 and 16

Photo 10: Looking northeast from above lots 15 and 16

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003 10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-6**
Photos 9 and 10

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Views of the Project Site

Due to the project's varied topography, the site is screened from the vast majority of distant views. As such, primary view corridors of the project site are available from the surrounding and nearby residential areas, including from the City of Glendale, which borders the western edge of the project site. These areas provide a range of unobstructed to various levels of obstructed views of the project site and visual amenities contained within. The following provides a detailed description of the three most prominent scenic vista points as they relate to the proposed project. These viewsheds and photo locations are marked on Figure 3.1-1, which indicates Viewsheds A, B, and C.

Viewshed A

Viewshed A includes various ranges of existing views of proposed Lots 1, 14, 15, and 16. Figure 3.1-7 (Photos 11 and 12) depicts the long-distance view of these proposed lots looking south from Interstate 210 and La Cañada Elementary School. Figure 3.1-8 (Photos 13 and 14) shows the middle and foreground views looking southwest from Inverness Drive and east from surrounding uses. The oak woodland vegetation and grassy slopes dominate the foreground to middle ground view. The middle ground view is dominated by views of heavily vegetated slopes. The distant view of this portion of the project area includes the tops of these slopes. However, the associated ridgeline is altered (i.e., cut slopes are evident) from its natural state through grading of portions of the Sacred Heart Academy property. Higher and further back is the top ridgeline, marked by Sacred Heart Academy buildings. Trees and sky are evident immediately behind the property.

Viewshed B

Viewshed B (Figure 3.1-9, Photos 15 and 16) includes existing views of proposed Lots 2 through 8. This view is from an elevation above the project site and looks northwest toward the southeasterly-facing hillside and associated views down the canyon. In the foreground view, grasses and shrubs are evident. More distant vegetated southeast-facing slopes are located within the middle ground view, where viewers' eyes are drawn to the ridgeline as the primary focal point. The middle ground view also contains some existing homes that overlook the canyon. More prominent distant ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains and views north toward Hahamongna Watershed Park can be seen from uses farther up in elevation. In addition, the Foothill Freeway (I-210) and adjacent area can be seen from such higher elevations.

Viewshed C

This vantage point (Figure 3.1-10, Photos 17 and 18) provides an existing view looking west from the residential uses located just west of the City of Glendale/City of La Cañada Flintridge boundary in the City of Glendale. The foreground is dominated by heavily vegetated open space, approximately 18 acres of which forms the western half of the project site. In the middle ground view, the existing ridgeline appears rounded where Lots 10 through 13 are proposed for development. The distant view depicts views of the San Gabriel Mountains to the west, as well as established neighborhoods and mature landscaping within the project vicinity.

Photo 11: View of the proposed project site from the 210 Freeway.

Photo 12: View of the proposed project site from La Cañada Flintridge Elementary school

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-7**
Photos 11 and 12

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Photo 13: Looking east at proposed lot 1

Photo 14: Proposed lots 15 and 16 looking south from Inverness drive

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-8**
Photos 13 and 14

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

Photo 15: (Viewshed B) Looking northwest from sacred heart academy property

Photo 16: Proposed lots 2, 3, and 8 looking southwest from Inverness drive

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003

10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-9**
Photos 15 and 16

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

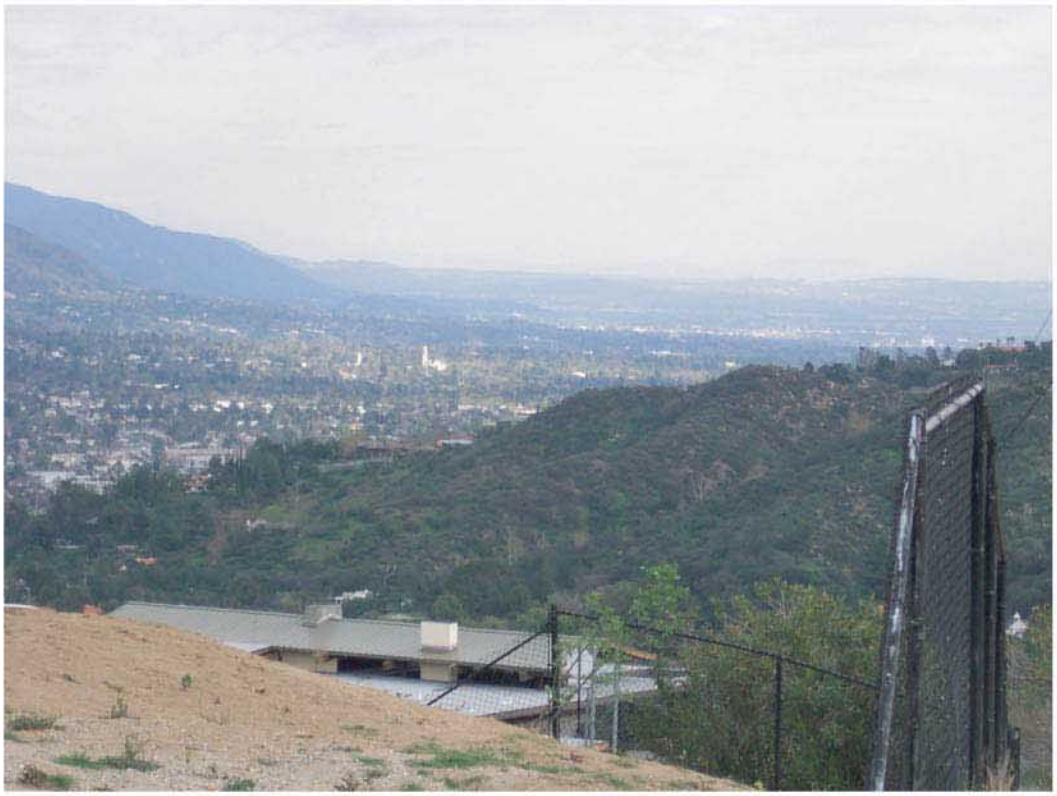

Photo 17: (Viewshed C) Looking east from City of Glendale

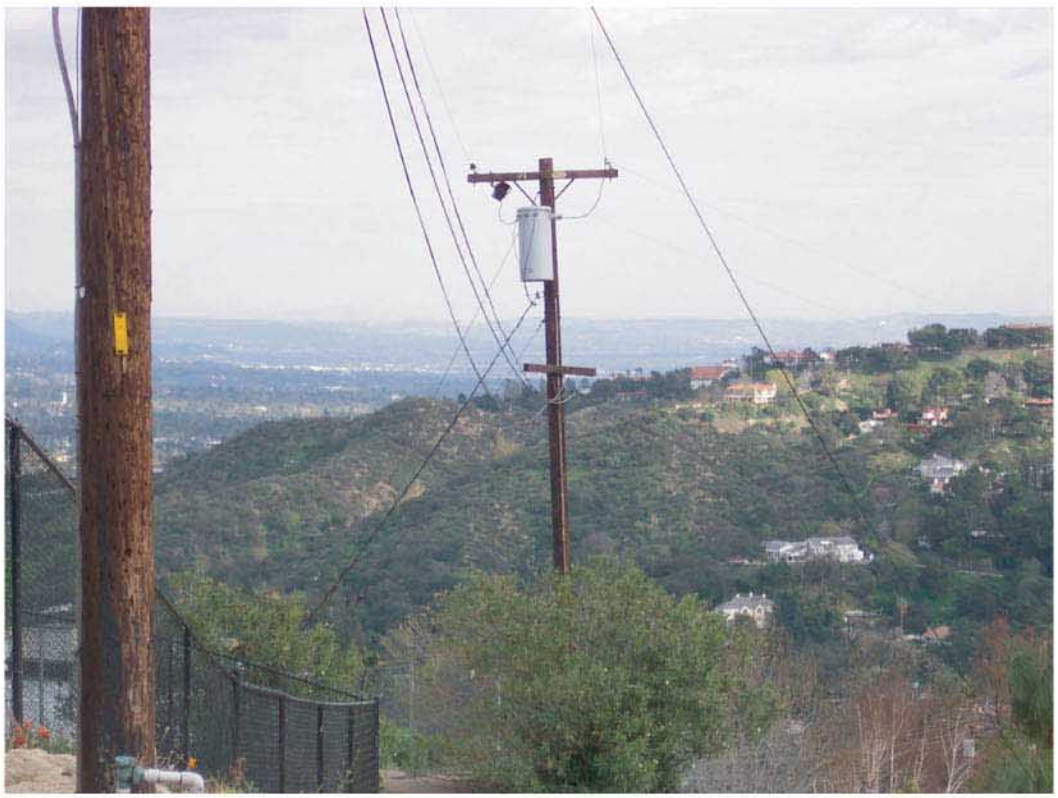

Photo 18: (Viewshed C) Looking east from City of Glendale

Not to Scale

SOURCE: EIP Associates, 2003 10734-00

EIP ASSOCIATES

FIGURE **3.1-10**
Photos 17 and 18

La Cañada Flintridge Tentative Tract Map 53647 and Variance 02-10 EIR

3.1.2 Regulatory Framework

City of La Cañada Flintridge Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is the principal method by which jurisdictions regulate land uses, building and lot sizes, building heights, and development character. A zoning ordinance consists of two primary components: (1) a map that delineates the boundaries of districts in which like uses developed at like standards are permitted; and (2) text that explains the purpose of the zoning district and lists the permitted uses and those permitted under special conditions and standards for development, such as minimum lot size, density, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and parking requirements. Each general plan land use category should be implemented by one or more corresponding zoning classifications. By law, the zoning ordinance must be consistent with the general plan and, therefore, form a basis for reviewing local housing capacity constraints.

The City of La Cañada Flintridge adopted by reference the County of Los Angeles Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 1494) on April 4, 1977, four months after the City's incorporation. Since that time, numerous City ordinances have revised, amended, or repealed portions of the County zoning ordinance to more closely reflect specific conditions and plans of the City.

City of La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code

Tree Ordinance (Chapter 4.26)

The tree ordinance for the City is in place to preserve and protect trees that are of historic or aesthetic importance and to provide for the protection and replacement of trees in order to maintain the community's wooded character; protect the scenic beauty of the area; reduce erosion of top soil, flood hazard, risk of landslides, and cost and maintenance of drainage systems through reduced flow and diversion of surface waters; and to address fire concerns by discouraging the planting of pines, deodar cedars, and other highly flammable trees. The ordinance states:

> - For single-family residential uses, no native oak, sycamore, deodar cedar, Chinese elm or California pepper tree with a trunk measuring 12 inches or more in diameter (as measured at a point four(4) feet from the ground surface at the natural grade) shall be removed without a Tree Removal Permit issued by the City. Where a tree trunk is divided below four feet above grade, the diameter of all trunks (as measured four feet from the natural grade) shall be added to determine tree diameter.

Furthermore:

> - For purposes of processing under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), any affected oak, deodar cedar, sycamore, Chinese elm, or California pepper tree which is 36" or greater in diameter shall be considered mature or scenic, and shall be subject to the environmental review processes related thereto.

The tree protection guidelines set the standards and specifications for the protection of these trees and offer protection measures for projects involving construction. They require the submittal of a tree protection plan for review and approval prior to any construction and/or development.

Hillside Ordinance (Chapter 11.35)

The purpose of Chapter 11.35's (Hillside Development Ordinance) development standards and guidelines is to protect existing open space and to ensure that any hillside development is orderly and consistent with desirable existing surrounding development patterns, is carried out in a manner which promotes and enhances public safety and general welfare, and is not disruptive of the predominant hillside character of the community. This Hillside Development Ordinance applies to any lot or parcel of land, residentially zoned and in residential use, which has an average slope of 15 percent or greater. Additionally, these provisions apply to previously graded hillside lots, the slope of which had been equal to or greater than 15 percent prior to grading, and for which no building permits currently in effect have been issued. Finally, in instances where this chapter conflicts with any other ordinance or regulation of the City, the provisions of this Hillside Ordinance shall take precedence and apply.

11.35.020 Policies

The following policies are reflective of community standards and shall apply to all hillside development projects undertaken in the City:

Policy A Existing community character, as defined by such factors as visual appearance, density, road widths, and vegetation shall be preserved and/or enhanced.

Policy B Prominent landforms within the community, including, but not limited to ridgelines, knolls, valleys, creeds (either dry or active), or other unique topographic features or viewscapes, shall be maintained. The most significant of such landforms are identified in the prominent landform policy of the City's General Plan.

Policy C Major hillside viewscapes visible from both points within the City shall not be detrimentally altered by the intrusion of highly visible cut and/or fill slopes, building lines and/or road surfaces.

Policy D The visual impact of grading shall be minimized.

Policy H Significant environmental and recreational resources shall be maintained and enhanced, including measures to prevent visual or physical encroachment into such resources.

Policy I New lots created under the provisions of this chapter shall be properly planned and designed to result in development that is in conformance with the Hillside Ordinance.

11.35.041 Parcel Standards and Guidelines

A. Density.

1. Newly Created Lots—Density Standards. Density overlay zones A and B, established in the environmental resources management element of the general plan, are shown in Map 1 of the general plan. For every property in any single family residential zone which is subject to the provisions of this chapter, there shall be an additional overlay zone designated by the respective zoning symbol plus either of

the letters "A" or "B"; for example, R-1-20,000-A and R-1-15,000-B, etc. The zone designated prior to the letters "A" or "B" (in the examples given, R-1-20,000 and R-1-15,000) shall be known as the basic zones and shall determine permitted use and minimum lot size. The overlay zone shall determine maximum development base densities as follows:

a. Density overlay zone "A" shall maintain development densities not exceeding one dwelling unit per one acre of site area as to any tract map (i.e., the creation of 5 or more lots).

b. Density overlay zone "B" shall maintain development densities not exceeding one dwelling per 5 acres of site area for any land division. This zone is applied to severe hillside areas of the city where developments with higher use densities could not be achieved in compliance with the policies and standards of this chapter and without detrimental effect upon public safety and aesthetics.

Density shall be subject to additional reduction with increasing slope when necessary to meet required findings per Section 11.35.060(D), using the slope factor.

2. Slope Factor. The slope factor is a development standard for land divisions, and a guideline for floor area restrictions. As average lot slope increases, allowable minimum size of newly created lots shall increase per the following Table 1. Additionally, for existing lots, allowable floor area shall be lowered per the following Table 1, unless the required findings per Section 11.35.060(D) can otherwise be made.

The slope factor is applied to land divisions and floor area as follows:

a. Minimum lot size standard for land divisions:

Underlying zoning or overlay zone minimum lot area, divided by slope factor (from 1.0 to 0.2, depending on average slope--see Table 1)

b. Allowable floor area guideline (structures):

Underlying maximum floor area for lot size (see Chapter 11.11), multiplied by slope factor (see Table 3.1-1).

B. Lot Configuration

1. Minimum Lot Dimension Standards

Width: 55 feet

Depth: 150 feet

Frontage: 40 feet

2. Excluded Areas Guidelines. No site portions of less than the following width, or separated from the main building pad by an y strip of less than the following width, shall be included in the tabulation of lot area for the purposed of calculating allowable lot size, density, lot coverage, or floor area, unless the required findings in Section 11.35.060(D) can otherwise be made.

R-1-40,000 or "B" density overlay: 55 feet

Other zones: 40 feet

3. Flag Lots

Flag lots shall be prohibited in proposed subdivisions or lot line adjustments.

11.35.042 Grading

A. General Grading

1. *Review Threshold*. Any grading volume exceeding 50 cubic yards, whether or not retained, is subject to director's review approval or incorporation into a higher level of approval.

2. *Preservation of Landforms*. Policy B of this chapter shall be upheld. Prominent landforms within the community, including, but not limited to ridgelines, knolls, valleys, creeks (either dry or active), or other unique topographic features or viewscapes, shall be maintained.

B. Slopes. The height of retaining wall(s) exposed to view shall be deducted from the permitted height of the slope.

1. Cut Slopes

a. Height Threshold. Unless approved at an administrative (or higher) hearing, the sum of the vertical heights, at any one section through the site, of any finished cut slopes created for the purpose of developing a residential dwelling or accessory use site, shall be limited to the height of the proposed structure wherever it is to be concealed from general view by that structure, or to a maximum of ten feet where exposed to general view.

b. Width Standard. Unless approved at an administrative (or higher) hearing, the lateral extension (width) of the finished cut slope shall not exceed the maximum width of the structure by more than twenty feet, with an additional twenty feet allowed for tapering to existing grade.

c. Gradient Threshold. Unless approved at an administrative (or higher) hearing, maximum exposed cut slope at any one section through the site shall not exceed that allowed by the city's building code in effect at the time of grading permit issuance, and shall be further limited to the average existing grade plus 20% grade. The existing and modified slopes shall be indicated on the topographical map by section cut lines spaced not more than 20 feet apart.

2. Fill Slopes.

a. Height Threshold. Unless approved at an administrative (or higher) hearing, the vertical height of any finished fill slope created for the purpose of developing a residential dwelling site shall not exceed ten feet.

b. Gradient Threshold. Unless approved at an administrative (or higher) hearing, maximum fill slope shall not exceed that allowed by the city's building code in effect at the time of grading permit issuance, and shall be limited to the average natural grade plus 20% grade. The existing and modified slopes shall be indicated on the topographical map by section cut lines spaced not more than 20 feet apart.

3. Slope Contours. Any manufactured slope, and the radius of any slope forming a transition between manufactured and natural slope shall follow the natural topography to the greatest extent possible. In not event shall less than 25% foot radius be used for the convex blending curvature where a cut slope or fill slope meets natural grade. The top and bottom of any cut slope or fill slope shall be rounded with a radius of not less than 5 feet.

4. Road or Driveway Cut/Fill. For a driveway or roadway, the maximum total vertical height of any combination of finished cut and fill slopes from grade shall not exceed 8 feet unless approved through administrative (or higher) review.

11.35.043 Siting

A. Minimum Setback Dimensions. Minimum setback dimensions shall conform to the standards for the underlying zone, except that a front setback reduction for one-story construction to no less than twenty feet may be approved through an administrative (or higher) hearing, upon finding that the reduced setback:

1. Minimizes grading, building visibility, or paving; and

2. Achieves compatibility with the neighborhood setting.

B. Ridgeline Protection.

1. Sites and Structures. Proposed building sites and/or structures shall not detrimentally impact a primary ridgelines or knoll as identified in the environmental resources management map contained with the city's general plan. Development on any parcel within 100 feet of an identified ridgeline shall be subject to planning commission approval.

2. Fences and Freestanding Walls. Fences and freestanding walls shall be located away from any ridgeline or crest of any slope so that such fences and walls are not visible against the sky from off site.

C. Watercourse Protection

1. Blockage. Blockage of watercourses, canyons, or streambeds is prohibited, and any alteration of such features is discouraged.

D. View Preservation. (For any project subject to public review, the project shall conform to the following guidelines to the extent possible and to the extent appropriate to its setting:)

1. Building(s) shall be place in a manner that minimizes blockage of neighboring views, especially those portions of any view that are central to the total view, and/or are viewed from primary living areas (living rooms, dining rooms, or foyers).

2. Landscaping height at maturity shall be consistent with preservation of neighbors' views.

11.35.046 Architectural Design Guidelines

A. Roof Pitch. The dominant roof pitch at the downslope side shall correspond to the natural slope of the site, and no more than twenty-five percent of the total roof area should be flat.

B. Vertical Accents. Vertical accents are encouraged, and shall be accompanied by a vertical break in wall surface.

C. Symmetry. Overall symmetry is strongly discouraged.

D. Wall Modulation.

1. Separation between Breaks. A vertical break or breaks in each wall surface shall be provided at least each forty feet on the first floor and each twenty feet on the second floor.

2. Break Dimensions. The breaks in plane recommended in preceding subsection (D)(1) of this section shall consist of significant projecting or recessed areas.

E. Surface Depth. Creation and expression of surface depth, through the use of deeply recessed wall openings, reveals, moldings, cornices, and similar devices, are encouraged.

F. Cantilevers. Cantilevers and dominant overhangs, except for eaves, are discouraged.

G. Brightness. Reflectance value (LRV) shall not exceed 50% for walls or fences, or 30% for roofs.

H. Reflectivity. Reflective glass and glossy roofing materials are discouraged.

I. Roof Elements. Reflective glass and glossy roofing materials are discouraged.

J. Retaining Walls. Retaining walls constructed of materials architecturally consistent with the development may be permitted in lieu of or in combination with cut or fill slopes.

11.35.047 Landscaping and lighting guidelines

A. Planting and Maintenance. Plants shall be established and maintained in accordance with the approved plan. Planting should be installed as early as possible following finish grading in order to allow timely granting of occupancy permits. Landscaping proposed to screen any part of the project must reasonably be expected to grow to an effective level in four years.

C. Screening.

1. Retaining Walls. Any retaining wall over 3 feet in height shall be screened from offsite view by a building or by landscaping.

2. Building Screening. Where building bulk as seen from downslope is a concern, effective mitigation through landscape screening shall be provided. Blockage by such landscaping of neighboring views over the site is discouraged.

3. Accessory Structures. Accessory structures shall be screened from offsite view.

E. Tree Sizes and Quantities. Sizes and quantities of new trees and existing trees to remain shall maximize retention and planting of mature trees, with a guideline of 25% of the new and existing trees either mature or of minimum 36 inches box size at planting.

F. Tree Protection. Any removal or pruning of existing trees shall conform to the requirements of the city's tree preservation ordinance, Municipal Code Chapter 4.26.

G. Site Lighting. Site lighting shall be oriented away from public rights-of-way and adjacent properties.

3.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

Implementation of the proposed project could result in potentially significant impacts if any of the following would occur:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, and rock outcroppings
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area

3.1.4 Impacts

Less-Than-Significant Impacts

Short-Term, Construction-Related Visual Impacts

The preliminary development schedule of the project entails a construction period of approximately 60 months, with primary site grading and construction of related infrastructure over the course of approximately 12 months. The potential short-term visual impacts of site grading and construction activities would include, for example, exposed slopes, dirt storage, and staging areas for construction activities and machinery. This short-term condition would create a temporary visual distraction typically associated with construction activities. However, due to the temporary nature of construction activities and the incorporation of standard City conditions, including those contained within the City's Hillside Ordinance, this short-term impact would be considered ***less than significant***.

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Impact AES-1 **The proposed project would result in significant visual impacts associated with grading. This is considered a *significant and unavoidable* impact.**

Impacts caused by landform alteration occur from the first efforts to clear vegetation for site preparation, and continue after all grading work has been completed. Since the existing geologic conditions of the project site require extensive cut and fill of earthen material to prepare the site for project development, the amount of grading resulting from the proposed project would be approximately 207,000 cubic yards. Areas currently characterized as moderately to steeply sloping would be modified to provide level building pads. The resulting activities would create cuts in the hillside and potential hillside scarring. Cleared slopes would change the visual character from densely vegetated to developed or barred earth. A grading plan has been developed by Kudrave Architects in cooperation with Spindler Engineering Corporation, and general use of appropriate grading techniques to reduce impacts to natural topography is anticipated. However, because significant landforms, ridgelines, and hillsides would be altered by project-related grading, this is considered a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact. Mitigation Measures AES-1.1, AES-1.2, and AES-1.3 are proposed to minimize the effects of project grading, but the impact will remain significant and unavoidable.

Impact AES-2 **The proposed project would result in significant alterations to existing viewsheds. This is considered a *significant and unavoidable* impact.**

The following discussion analyzes potential impacts to the specific viewsheds of the project site described in Subsection 3.1.2. This analysis evaluates the effects of proposed project implementation on key views from surrounding land uses by comparing the pre- and post-project conditions. Review of the project development from the three specific viewshed locations shown in Figure 3.1-1 provides a visual understanding of the project's effects on the area's visual resources.

Viewshed A. In post-development, the foreground view of the grassy slopes and oak trees along the proposed extension of Monarch Drive and below proposed Lots 1, 14, 15, and 16 would not be substantially altered. Middle ground views would change with development of the project. Existing midrange views of the project site, looking southeast from the northwest surrounding uses (see Figure 3.1-8), consist of steep rolling hillsides with vegetation consisting of oak woodland and grasses. Grading necessary to provide access and create building pads would result in significant hillside alterations where Lots 1, 14, 15, and 16, as well as an extension of Monarch Drive, are proposed, as can be seen in the views (see Figure 1.3-8 and Figure 1.3-9). Cut slopes would be revegetated as part of the proposed project to control erosion and minimize visual impacts. In the mid-range view, homes and landscaping would be visible along Inverness Drive, as the proposed project development would result in the alteration of views from Inverness Drive looking south by significantly altering existing natural hillsides and natural vegetation. Visual quality of the site would be diminished due to the loss of expansive views of naturalistic, undeveloped area. The homes and landscaping resulting from implementation would replace these existing views, although the proposed development would be similar to the surrounding area, but would change the middle ground view. Creating the pads for these lots would require cutting back the ridgeline and steep slopes and would result in a new, visible cut slope. Grading for Monarch Drive would be minimal, however, because a fire road already exists in this location. Homes and landscaping proposed on these lots do not interrupt views of the skyline, but would block views of the lower slopes behind the homes.

Existing long-range views of the project site looking south from Interstate 210 (I-210) consist of steep, rolling hillsides that are naturally vegetated with residential development surrounding it. Grading and development of residential structures constitute a significant visual intrusion of the existing natural viewshed of these hillsides by significantly altering the existing pristine nature of the area. In addition, development of the proposed project would result in the loss of a major undeveloped area, especially as seen from a public thoroughfare such as the I-210. However, there would be no changes to the distant views of the highest ridgeline and skyline. Therefore, the alteration of the project site from undeveloped open areas to planned residential development, including the grading of a Significant Land Form, represents a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact to long- and mid-range views. Mitigation Measures AES-1.1, AES-1.2, and AES-1.3 would help to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level.

Viewshed B. In the post-development condition, foreground views of the site would not be substantially altered, as development would result in native chaparral and scrub primarily staying but with the inclusion of some development and infrastructure (i.e., driveways) at a scaled-back level. Existing slopes and natural vegetation, as can be seen in the mid-range views looking northwest from the Sacred Heart Academy property and looking

southwest from Inverness Drive (see Figure 3.1-7), would be replaced with views of the new homes and new landscaping that would be more prominent than the existing natural vegetation. Grading necessary to provide access and create building pads would result in cutting back the ridgeline where Lots 2 through 8 are proposed and infill the woodland in the adjacent canyon. Cut slopes would be revegetated as part of the proposed project to control erosion and minimize visual impacts. Future homes at the terminus of the proposed Monarch Drive extension on Lots 2, 3, and 8 would be situated along the southeasterly-facing slope of the site and would alter this hillside and associated mid-range views looking northwest from surrounding uses. Future homes and landscaping on Lots 4 through 7 at the terminus of a proposed unnamed public road would be also be prominent in the mid-range view, as this portion of the proposed development would entail alteration of these views by eliminating existing natural slopes, hillsides, and vegetation. Despite the changes, development would not obstruct views of more prominent distant ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains or views north toward Hahamongna Watershed Park.

Middle ground views of the project site looking to the northwest from the northerly-facing slopes and uses would constitute a visual alteration of the existing hillsides. As shown in Figure 2-3, upon project development, Monarch Drive would be extended to access the site, and the existing rolling hills at the terminus of the proposed unnamed public road would be eliminated. Proposed project development would result in the alteration of views from surrounding uses looking northwest at the project site by eliminating existing natural hillsides and natural vegetation. In addition, visual quality of the site would be diminished, due to the loss of undeveloped area. However, the proposed project would maintain a conservation easement of 18.36 acres within the project site boundary as open space. Therefore, this portion of the viewshed would remain in its existing condition following project development. In addition, Mitigation Measures AES-1.1, AES-1.2, and AES-1.3 would help to minimize the impacts on this viewshed by the proposed project, but not to a less-than-significant level, and this impact would, therefore, remain ***significant and unavoidable***.

Viewshed C. Implementation of the proposed project would require the extension of Haverstock Road into this view of the project site, as well as grading to create development pads for proposed Lots 10 through 13. The foreground view, looking east, of existing open space would not substantially change with development of the project. However, views of the middle ground looking east from nearby City of La Cañada Flintridge and City of Glendale uses would be altered as a result of the project. Figure 3.1-10 includes photos of this view taken from the City of Glendale at a higher elevation than City of Glendale and La Cañada Flintridge uses west of the proposed project, thus, it depicts a clearer and more unobstructed view of proposed Lots 10 through 13 than actual La Cañada Flintridge and Glendale uses would hold. The post-development, middle ground view would include the extension of Haverstock Road from near its existing terminus. Views of homes and landscaping along this proposed Haverstock Road extension would replace current views of the natural ridgeline.

The middle ground view would change substantially with the grading of the ridge to accommodate proposed Lots 10 through 13. This ridge would be terraced to create pads for development. Grading for extension of Haverstock Road would also be visible from such La Cañada Flintridge and Glendale uses to the west; however, City of Glendale staff has agreed that views of proposed Lots 10 through 13 from Glendale uses are currently intermittent and would not be greatly affected by development of the proposed project. The houses and trees along the

proposed Haverstock Road extension would be prominent features of this easterly view, but they do not block views of the adjacent open space to the west or distant views to the east and northeast. Therefore, distant views of the San Gabriel Mountains would not be significantly altered by the proposed project. However, the proposed project's impact to mid-range views would remain ***significant and unavoidable***. Mitigation Measures AES-1.1, AES-1.2, and AES-1.3 would help to minimize this impact, but would not reduce it to a less-than-significant level.

3.1.5 Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts

MM AES-1.1 The Applicant shall submit the proposed project to the Department of Community Development for landscaping/tree protection review and approval, consistent with Chapter 4.26 (Tree Ordinance) of the La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code, prior to any construction and/or development.

MM AES-1.2 The Applicant shall submit the proposed project to the Department of Community Development for hillside plan review and approval, consistent with Chapter 11.35 (Hillside Development) of the La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code, prior to any construction and/or development.

MM AES-1.3 Grading shall be accomplished in accordance with Chapter 11.35.042 (Hillside Development Grading) of the La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code so as to compliment the natural contours of the site, have finished grading appear natural, and minimize the alteration of the natural landform.

Implementation of these mitigation measures would help reduce aesthetics impacts associated with the proposed project. However, the significant and unavoidable impacts would remain.

3.1.6 Cumulative Impacts

Visual impacts associated with the proposed project, in combination with other alterations to visual resources throughout the region, would result in the degradation of community-wide visual resources. For the City and the surrounding region, the diminishing visual resources would result from increasing development intensity (and general reduction in the aesthetic value of natural resources) and the degradation of primary ridgelines. Although all development within the City would be subject to the Municipal Code and General Plan policies applicable to Aesthetics, large-scale loss of the aesthetic value associated with these resources that affects public views would be considered cumulatively significant.

Since project development would modify lands that are undeveloped, the character of the area would be substantially altered, which would result in significant cumulative impacts. Approximately 18 acres of the project site would remain as dedicated open space, with additional landscaped areas surrounding each home site, retaining some of the site's natural landform features, and the project would not appear out of character when compared with surrounding land uses. However, the increase in development intensity of the project site, when compared with current uses, contributes incrementally to the visual degradation of the area. This would be considered a significant cumulative impact of the proposed project.

3.1.7 References

Kudrave Architects. 2002. *Tentative Tract Map No. 53647, La Cañada Flintridge, California*. Revised 17 April.

La Cañada Flintridge, City of. 1993. *General Plan.* Adopted 15 November.

La Cañada Flintridge, City of. *Municipal Code*.

Stotler, Laura. 2003. Personal communication with City of Glendale Principal Planner, 7 February.

Thomas Bros. Maps. 2002. *The Thomas Guide: Los Angeles and Orange Counties.*